

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-11 L-03

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R 220845Z AUG 74

FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4087

INFO AMEMBASSY SEOUL

CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L TOKYO 10925

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, KS, JA

SUBJECT: GOJ REACTION TO STATEMENT BY KOREAN PREMIER

SUMMARY: GOJ HAS MADE VAGUE STATEMENT OF REGRET TO SOOTHE
ROK SENSITIVITIES OVER JAPANESE CONNECTION WITH PARK
ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT. STATEMENT MAY BE TOO LITTLE,
TOO LATE TO ACHIEVE PURPOSE. END SUMMARY.

1. FONOFF ISSUED BACKGROUND STATEMENT TO PRESS AUGUST 21
THAT GOJ REGRETTED PREPARATIONS FOR PARK ASSASSINATION
HAD APPARENTLY BEEN MADE IN JAPAN. STATEMENT WAS
ANSWER TO KOREAN PREMIER KIM CHONG-PIL'S ANGRY REACTION
AUG 20 AGAINST EARLIER FONOFF BACKGROUND ASSERTION
THAT JAPAN SHOULD FEEL NEITHER LEGAL NOR MORAL
RESPONSIBILITY FOR PARK ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT.
FOREIGN OFFICE SPOKESMAN ADDED THAT THEY WERE NOT
TRYING TO ENDORSE OR DISPUTE THE SOUTH KOREAN CLAIM
THAT IT OBVIOUS THAT ASSASSINATION PREPARED IN JAPAN.

2. NORTHEAST ASIA DIV DIR SEO COMMENTED TO EMBOFF THAT
GOJ DEEPLY EMBARRASSED BY KIM STATEMENT. ORIGINAL
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GOJ ASSERTION HAD BEEN MADE INFORMALLY DURING BRIEFING

BY FONOFF IN RESPONSE TO PRESS QUERY WHETHER TANAKA ATTENDANCE AT PARK FUNERAL COULD BE CONSTRUED AS APOLOGY. ANSWER WAS THAT SINCE JAPAN NOT RESPONSIBLE, NO APOLOGY IN ORDER. STATEMENT WHICH SEO SAID REPORTED OUT OF CONTEXT IN ASAHI HAD APPARENTLY SET KIM OFF. IN ADDITION KIM'S ANGER MAY HAVE BEEN PIQUED BY REFUSAL OF TANAKA TO MEET HIM AT OFFICE IN SEOUL AFTER FUNERAL, DESPITE REPEATED REQUESTS. TANAKA HAD FELT, ACCORDING TO SEO, THAT PRIME PURPOSE OF TRIP WAS CEREMONIAL AND THAT SUBSTANTIVE MEETING IN KIM'S OFFICE INAPPROPRIATE. IF KIM HAD WISHED TO SEE TANAKA PRIVATELY TO EXPRESS GRATITUDE FOR HIS VISIT , IT WOULD HAVE BEEN FITTING FOR HIM TO COME TO SEE TANAKA AT JAPANESE EMBASSY.

3. AUG 21 ASSERTION OF REGRET, WHICH MADE TO PRESS BY VICE FOREIGN MINISTER TOGO, DESIGNED TO CALM SITUATION. IN ADDITION, FONOFF PLANS TO INSTRUCT JAPANESE EMBASSY IN SEOUL TOMORROW TO PRESENT ROK WITH MORE DETAILED EXPLANATION AND CLARIFICATION.

4. COMMENT: ORIGINAL GOJ ASSERTION WOULD APPEAR INFURIATING TO ROK WHETHER IN CONTEXT OR NOT. GOJ, WITH DEMONSTRATIONS UNDERWAY IN KOREA AND REPORTEDLY GROWING IN SIZE, APPARENTLY HAS GRASPED INCENDIARY POTENTIAL OF ORIGINAL STATEMENT AND MOVED TO SOFTEN POSITION. QUESTION REMAINS WHETHER STATEMENT EITHER SOOTHING OR TIMELY ENOUGH TO ACHIEVE PURPOSE.
HODGSON

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